

## Contributions

### THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

J. C. CASSEL

The conference program for this year as published in the EVANGELIST appears to have had more than usual consideration. It is very comprehensive in its scope of subjects for discussion. Aside from the conventional routine of reports it embraces the following topics :

The Theological School and the Preacher.  
The College as a Center of Spiritual Power.  
The Church Paper as an Educator.  
The Ideal Sunday-School Quarterly.  
Tracts, their Contents, Style and Use.  
Incentives to Missionary Zeal.  
The West as a Missionary Field for the Brethren Church.  
Are we Ready to Enter the Foreign Field?  
The Reflex Influence of Missions.  
The Use of Church Discipline.  
The Attitude of the Church Toward Popular Amusements.  
The Holy Spirit and the Word.  
The Dead Line in the Ministry.  
The Periodical Revival.  
Our Ministry, How to Increase its Numbers and Efficiency.  
Some Needed Reform in Sunday-School Work.  
The Duty of the Strong Congregation Toward the Weak.  
Neglected Bible Truth.  
The Ethical and Doctrinal Value of the Old Testament Scriptures.

#### IN THE S. S. C. E. PROGRAM

The Real Mission of the S. S. C. E.  
The Power of Prayer in a Consecrated Life.  
Silent Workers.  
Divine Growth.  
How May the S. S. C. E. do a World-Wide Mission Work.

#### IN THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROGRAM

The Approaching Era and its Problems.  
The Missionary Outlook for the 20th Century.  
Our Opportunities and Responsibilities.  
The Young People's Century.  
Young People as God's Witness.  
Pentecostal Power, What, How, Why?  
Our Young People's Society in Business and Social Life.

With such an array of subjects touching almost every phase of our work we can not fail to have a great conference, if those who have topics assigned them will carefully and prayerfully consider them, and thus give us the expression of their thought.

The Executive Committee also exercised good judgement in the assignment of topics. Who is more able to set forth the church paper than our editor, A. D. Gnagey? Who among us has studied the question of Sunday-school Quarterlies more fully than Brother Gillin? Who else could treat the ethical and doctrinal value of the Old Testament scriptures like Prof. Furry? Who could, or would, emphasize neglected Bible truth like Eld. I. D. Bowman, or who the use of discipline in the church like Brother Rench?

There is one important subject that has been overlooked: that is the relation between our district and national conferences. This may become a question for discussion some day when it is not on the program; the better time to discuss it, and pass upon it is

when there is no real occasion for it, as it would then, probably be done without bias or prejudice.

Let there be a movement all along the line toward a pleasant and profitable conference. We come together from great distances, at great expense; let us compensate for all this by the *result* of our coming together. Some of our older brethren question the wisdom of the "boys" coming together annually for a good time; let us prove that we have a higher motive than simply a good time; let us show that we have a high purpose, by a consecration of heart and soul to the Master's work.

I trust the churches will speedily elect their delegates and provide the necessary means for them to attend the conference, so that the education and enthusiasm of the occasion will be carried back to all parts of the church from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

### CHURCH GOVERNMENT

W. M. LYON

Do we need anything more than God's word for the government of the church? There are those who think that the gospel is not sufficient of itself; they claim that we must have a "system of church government"—a kind of supplementary edition of the gospel. Paul speaks of a class of this kind in Gal. 1:6-12. Evidently they did not believe in the completeness—the all-sufficiency of "the revelation of Jesus Christ," v. 12.

"But we must have rules." We frequently hear such expressions. I wonder why the Lord sealed his Book before it was finished. Brother, don't you think you would be a very good man if you would only be satisfied to follow the plain, old-fashioned gospel just as it is? Do you think it is not plain and simple enough of itself? Besides, who gave you any authority to add anything to it? "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," Rev. 1:8. "He is the Author and finisher of our faith," Heb. 12:2. "Ye are complete in Him," Col. 2:10.

Do not these expressions, (and there are many like them) teach that the church does not need more rules, decisions, discipline, etc; but that the supreme need is to appropriate that which we already have?

But it is claimed that we must have rules and regulations outside of the gospel in order to "keep the church pure." What an awful libel is this upon the One who saves to the uttermost!

In the first place, who has commanded us to keep the church pure? I am glad that we are not commanded to do this. That other commandment is quite enough for me; the one which says, "Keep thyself pure," I Tim. 5:22.

People that do not live as becometh those professing godliness are not benefitted by church discipline as it is usually administered. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation if it is obeyed.

If it is not obeyed what does it profit to resort to certain forms and rules made by un-

inspired men? That was the mistake made by some who professed to love God in the days of Christ, of whom he said, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." Matt. 15:9.

Again, the churches that believe the gospel is not sufficient for all purposes, in government as well as in all other things, by their own acts declare that they are not governed by divine wisdom. Look at the many decisions that have become obsolete. This is true with reference to many denominations. In their earlier days, before they began to make rules and decisions, their body was characterized by lives of purity. Men and women served God because they loved him and his Word. Time advanced and some thought that they needed something more than the gospel in order to properly govern the churches. They got the rules they asked for but these failed to insure church purity. Rules that were applied vigorously a generation ago are now ignored altogether. Why not stick to the gospel? There was a time when that was all that was needed. Those were days in which people believed that God could manage his own affairs without going to them for wisdom. We don't need anything but the gospel today. Take it as it is. If God can't make himself understood in his own way and in his own words, surely he knows better than to call on us for wisdom. Just keep still. Let him speak and rule.

### HUNTED BY CONSCIENCE

C. ORVILLE WITTER

The best of the evening entertainments for the week ending July 21, was the impersonating of Jean Val Jean in *Les Misérables*, by Montaville Flowers. Mr. Flowers is a master in his profession and to those who had and to those who had not read the book he brought the realization of the fact that the conscience is a very difficult pursuer to flee from.

Notwithstanding the fact that Jean Val Jean was free from his prison life and had abundance of wealth he was still an unhappy man. Why was he unhappy? One who had followed the details of his life might think it was because the child he had adopted and loved as a daughter was to leave him and love another. Or his vigilance so necessary to avoid being recaptured by the police might be considered enough to make a man unhappy. But the confession of the old man when his life was nearly spent was a confession which bespoke a universal experience. It is not the external things which trouble the guilty soul so much as the internal prickings of conscience. We can not but contrast Jean Val Jean with the convict spoken of by Mrs. Booth in her lecture on "Prison Life." Jean was free from his prison bonds; he had great wealth and no one knew but what he was dead as reported, and that he, under his new name, was really a different man, yet he was unhappy. The other was confined within the gloomy prison walls with years of confinement ahead and